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Pipeline wars; Alberta-B.C. clash just the latest result of petrophobes'war on the oilsands

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Body

The clash between B.C. and Alberta goes a lot deeper than the current headlines.

At least 10 or 20 years of ruthlessly organized, internationally endowed, wildly overblown scare propaganda against the Canadian oil industry, most especially as symbolized by the Fort McMurray oilsands project, has preceded it. The shielding umbrella under which the campaign has been waged, and the spurious ideological warrant behind it, has been the global warming fetish that locates the Earth's imminent ***doom*** in the industrial economies of modern capitalism. Its foot soldiers have been a tormented assembly of every hard left groupuscule from the trendy Chavistas (Naomi Klein Inc.) to the fatuous (Bill Nye) to the grimly Calvinist Greens. At both ends they are an angry and a zealous lot, unscrupulous in their messaging and remorselessly uncompromising in their aims: shut down oil, cost to the world be damned.

Alberta, in particular, has been their toy. They have had 20 years to spread the message that Alberta's oil, and Fort McMurray in deep particular, are both trigger and emblem of the coming catastrophe, that the hundreds of thousands who toil in the oilsands are as the orcs of Mordor moving ever closer to returning the Earth to Darkness and working Nature's ruin.

No other state or province, and no other single project has borne the weight of calumny and accusation as have Alberta and Fort McMurray. No campaigns against projects in China, India, the Middle East, the U.S. or Latin America have been of even near duration or intensity as their relentless crusade against the oilsands and Fort McMurray. The oilsands are as a pinprick in the world's energy production, yet as the ***eco*** Furies paint them, they are Armageddon's launch pad.

When, despite protest, propaganda, misrepresentation and chronic interference, the oilsands project did move ahead, when, despite the "infinite regress" (C. Cosh) of environmental assessment and reassessment, it lurched to production, clearly novel tactics had to be summoned, the campaign reframed.

Enter the pipeline frenzy. The innocent pipeline as Destroyer of Worlds. Once oil was there to be delivered, there arose the intractable opposition to every and any pipeline, turned to any point of the compass, within Canada or outside, coming out of Alberta. The professional petrophobes had failed to keep the oil in the ground; now they determined to landlock it in Alberta.

They couldn't stop the oil from being harvested, so they would turn Alberta into an energy jail.

Delay and obstruction are activists'favoured munitions, as seen in so many other pipelines and projects. Petronas and its $36-billion project was procrastinated into oblivion. Energy East was cancelled over ever-extended

regulations. Stall, freeze, regulate, litigate, occupy and demonstrate - anything that slows progress or jams an operation - if it's the oilsands, all's on the table. Obama speciously dawdled for his whole two terms on Keystone. Fortunately, on that one Mr. Trump was more prompt.

The tactics change, the game remains the same - stop Alberta and its "toxic" world-ruinous oilsands. It is in this context we should view recent events, and the emergence of the Alberta-B.C. clash.

Two decades of incessant campaign and propaganda have had a cumulative effect - an abiding weight of preconception and indisposition against any fair reading of Alberta's dilemma. It lubricates the singular and farcical association of the oilsands and the Green nightmare of CO2 ***doom***.

And it supplies the backdrop for the political manoeuvring of B.C. Premier John Horgan and his Green Council of Three, the shameless demand for yet another environmental assessment - the most transparent political ploy since Dalton McGuinty in Ontario cancelled two gas plants to leverage an election vote.

It should also work to remind people that when Mr. Trudeau endlessly parrots the formula of the "balance between the environment and the economy" it is not a balance he has any personal familiarity or experience with. On how many of his incessant travels has he spoken up for Alberta's industry, or, equally to the point, condemned the concert of environmental groups making a career out of opposition to Alberta? He has had the choice of venues and the world's ear. How many times even within Canada? Has there even been one national address on Alberta's plight - after the price downturn, after the inferno that ravaged Fort McMurray, after the fight of capital and companies from the oilsands? No. Contrast that with his interminable rhapsodies on carbon taxes and ***climate*** change.

And so it is that with the latest salvo from B.C., Premier Rachel Notley pushes on alone.

She may have thought she had a deal with Justin Trudeau on "social licence" but she never did - just a treacle of insincere bromides, verbal goo to serve a moment's press, forgotten before the camera lights dimmed. Her erstwhile partner in "the balance" hovers blandly above the contest, even as a fracture in the Confederation threatens.

Oh, the Trudeau government has approved the pipeline. Mr. Trudeau has said so himself as recently as Thursday in San Francisco. How lethargic though are his iterations of that approval, passionless to the point of coma. Where's his presence on the issue? Where's the prime ministerial voice on its relation to the national interest? Where's his rebuke to the grandstanding in B.C.? He's been stronger lobbying Jeff Bezos on Amazon for Toronto than the country or the world on the oilsands.

A province that fed the national economy during rough times is having rough times itself. Return the favour, serve the national interest, and declare the time for obstruction, assessments and political theatre is over. Alberta should not have to keep selling its resource at a blinding discount because the prime minister shivers over the thought of a backlash from Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, or a frown from the one-member, one-cause party in the House of Commons.

The Trudeau government it is clear, from the mouth of its leader, and the cast of its advisers, and the character of its ministers on this file, devotes far more sympathy to those who warn of oil, fear global collapse and participate in global campaigns against it, than the opposite. They are ParisPeople more than CalgaryPeople, more Rio than Fort Mac. The IPCC will never convene in Edmonton. !@COPYRIGHT=© 2018 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

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